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PRC-001-20

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Reference Center
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

VIA: Executive Director
Executive for Administration and Management
Chief, Reference Center

15 April 1948

Exploitation of Russian Periodicals

1. Reference Center has been in close consultation with both ORE and FDB on this subject.

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2. It is understood that FDB will very soon initiate a series of [redacted] reports giving authors' names and translated tables of contents for each Russian periodical received. The most valuable articles in each periodical will thereafter be abstracted and published by FDB as is now being done.

3. FDB [redacted] has expressed doubt that the Tables of Contents, as opposed to the Abstracts, will have enough intelligence value in themselves to merit a machine operation. Reference Center's Librarian [redacted], is inclined to agree. Therefore no immediate steps to instigate a machine operation on the Tables of Contents are now contemplated.

4. An intensive operation on the Abstracts is planned, but will have to await (1) completion of the IBM/Finch machinery now being developed for Reference Center, and expected to be available toward the end of 1948, and (2) clearance on a sufficient number of typist personnel to handle the project when the machines are received. As planned, the operation will provide every authorized recipient with a tailored set of those abstracts which fall within his cognizance either as to subject matter or as to geographic area.

5. I see only two flaws in the above. (1) The unavoidable delay before we will be able to provide the tailored abstract service, and (2) failure of the scheme to provide for rapid listing of all articles published by any specific Russian personality. Such a listing, by personalities, might have sufficient value to biographic intelligence to justify an operation on the Tables of Contents similar to that now being performed for foreign broadcast materials.

6. It is believed we should await receipt of a substantial number of the forthcoming Tables of Contents before deciding whether or not to deploy available manpower on a machine operation which would provide only (a) author's names and (b) the titles, often misleading, of their journal publications.

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Subject: Project 00-20

1st Ind.

9 April 1948

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To : The Director of Central Intelligence
(Through Executive for A&M)

From: Assistant Director [REDACTED]

1. This office regrets that the initiation of this project was delayed through a misunderstanding.

2. Reference your buck slip request for recommendation, it is the opinion of this office that no further action is required on the part of ORE to implement Project [REDACTED], as presently approved. The Office of Reports & Estimates requirements have now been processed through OCD, a collection directive number and priority have been assigned (CD-3864.1, FDB priority B), and bibliographies of 70 Soviet periodicals have been prepared by FDB. Publication of these is awaiting final approval by OCD of the proposed format for dissemination, and completion of arrangements with Services Branch for reproduction.

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3. In order that the project may be of more value to the researcher, it is recommended that Reference Center consult with ORE on the feasibility of coding, indexing, and cross-referencing of this bibliographic data by machine methods, with a view towards the ultimate provision of select bibliographies of all articles in Soviet periodicals referring to one given subject or area. Project [REDACTED], according to ORE's requirements, calls for the listing of all articles in one issue of one publication, but does not provide for a breakdown by subject. Such a breakdown would require an elaborate system of cross-indexing, which would be impracticable except by machine record methods.

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EDWIN L. SIBERT
Brigadier General, USA

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